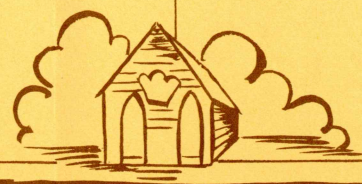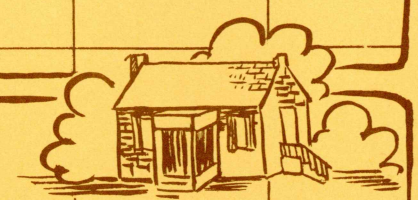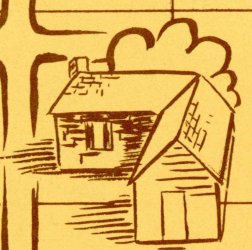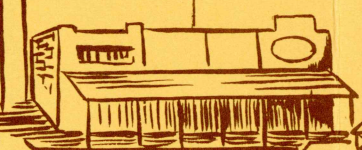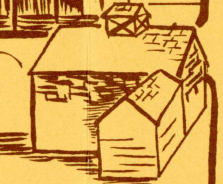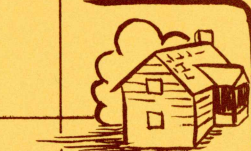# ARROW ROCK, MISSOURI

THE LYCEUM

DR. MATTHEW HALL HOME

GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM HOME

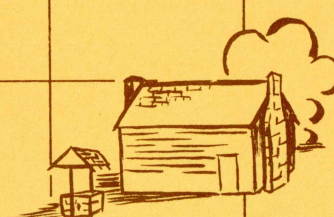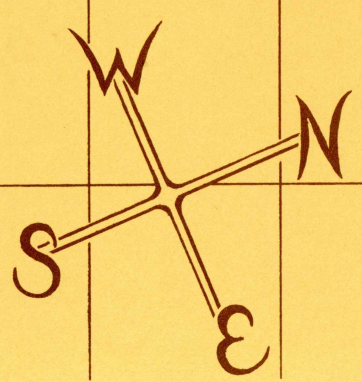MAIN ST.
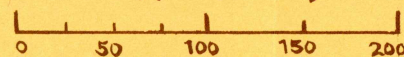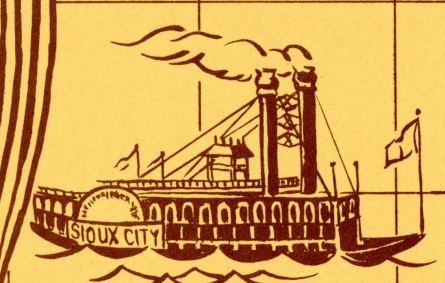
THE OLD TAVERN

THE OLD COURT HOUSE

THE OLD SEMINARY

MISSOURI RIVER

THE CALABOOSE

SIOUX CITY

FERRY LANDING

TOBACCO WAREHOUSE

W N S E

SCALE
¼ inch = approximately 25 ft.

0   50   100   150   200

Mary Ann Hall ©

History of Arrow Rock, Missouri

Arrow Rock, once a bustling frontier town with a peak population of about 1000, is today a tranquil, unique village with an aura of the past found in few places in the United States. Its population today is approximately 130.

As was often the case, Arrow Rock developed into a frontier town because of its strategic location along a road to the West — the Missouri River. However, even before the white man appraised the value of the spot, the Indians had put Arrow Rock to good use. An Indian trail crossing the entire state of Missouri followed generally the course of the Missouri River. The channel of the river narrowed somewhat at Arrow Rock. Consequently, the Indian trail crossed the river there. Once across the river on the south side, the trail followed a break in the bluffs, formed by a creek, to the high ground and continued on West.

French explorers and trappers of the early 1700's were probably the first white men to see Arrow Rock. One of the earliest recorded comments about the place was made on June 9, 1804, by Lewis and Clark on their journey to explore the river to the West. Clark returned in 1808, on his way West to build Fort Osage. He observed on his trip back to St. Louis that Arrow Rock was a "handsome spot for a town."

The first building on the Arrow Rock site was a block house and trading post built there in 1813, by George C. Sibley after he had evacuated Fort Osage during the War of 1812. In 1814, Sibley abandoned the fort because of Indian raids. The place believed to have been the site of Sibley's block house is on the bluff at the end of High Street.

By 1817, there were enough settlers moving into and through the mid-Missouri area to justify a ferry at Arrow Rock. In November of that year, John Ferrill built a tavern at the ferry landing to accommodate the travelers. (In 1820, the tavern and the ferry were owned by David Todd, uncle of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln.) Most of these settlers were Kentuckians and Virginians.

On September 1, 1821, William Becknell and his party of four left Franklin, Missouri, on a trading expedition which took them to Santa Fe, in the Southwest. Franklin, Missouri was just across the river and downstream from Arrow Rock. This was the first of many expeditions to the country around Santa Fe, all of which started at Franklin or Arrow Rock until Independence became established as an outfitting place.

The town of Arrow Rock, in fact, was born on June 10, 1829, through the donation of a 50-acre tract of land. The town was platted by M. M. Marmaduke and was originally called New Philadelphia. The name was changed to Arrow Rock by an act of the Legislature in 1835.

Arrow Rock eventually became a business and social center for the area. From 1839 to 1840, Arrow Rock served as the temporary County Seat of Saline County. The year 1842, saw the Arrow Rock Lodge W 55 A.F.&M. become the first Masonic Lodge in Saline County. "The Philamatheans," a local literary and debating club, was active in the 1850's. By 1860, the population had reached 1,000, river traffic to Arrow Rock was at its peak, weekly stage line service was established, and a telegraph line installed.

In its heyday Arrow Rock counted among its citizens three governors, none of whom served a full term in the office. They were Meredith M. Marmaduke (1844), Claiborn F. Jackson (1860-1861), and John S. Marmaduke (1884-1887). It was also the home of the artist, George Caleb Bingham, Dr. John Sappington of medical fame, and General Thomas A. Smith, an agricultural experimenter.
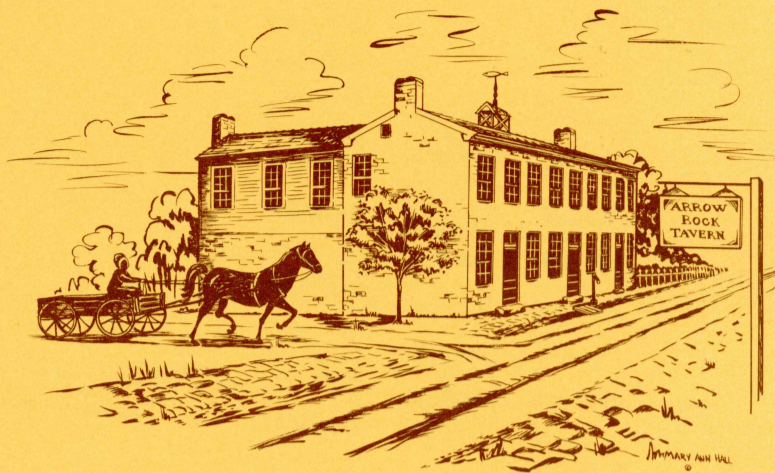
Arrow Rock began to diminish in importance and population after the Civil War. By 1873, the population was 600. Major fires scarred the town in 1873, and again in 1901. The fire in 1873 was believed to have been the work of there young arsonists who were reportedly lynched by mobs. By 1901, Arrow Rock was considered very old and something of a relic.

The death knell for Arrow Rock was sounded in 1923, when a bridge across the Missouri River was constructed at Glasgow instead of Arrow Rock. Thus the irony of Arrow Rock is complete—it rose to importance because of its location along the major transportation route to the Frontier and declined in importance when bypassed by more modern transportation routes.
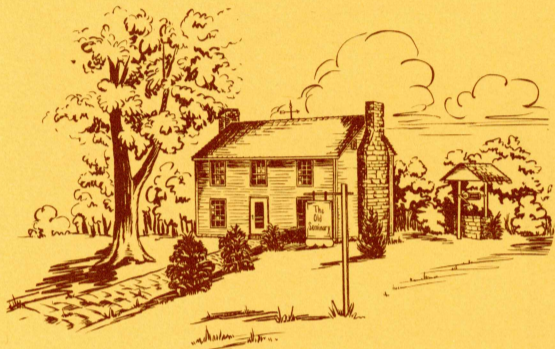
THE TAVERN

The Old Tavern was constructed in several phases, the first in 1834, by Judge Joseph Huston. The original building is a Federal style, two-and-a-half story, brick structure. In the 1840's, the "tap room" (originally a general store) and the ball room (used for town meetings and balls) were added. The date of the third addition is unknown, but consists of the framed part of the building in the back. The building was known as the "City Hotel" around the turn of the century. Originally the old road up from the ferry landing passed the east side of the tavern and turned west passing just in front of the building onto Main Street. The building was acquired by the State of Missouri in 1923, restored by the Missouri State Park Board, and placed under the Missouri Society of the Daughters of American Revolution for administration.
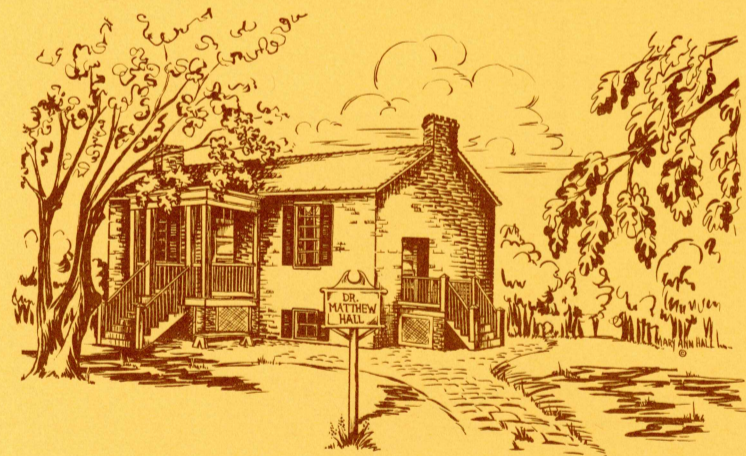
OLD SEMINARY BUILDING

Built in the 1830's the Seminary Building is a Federal Style building which served as living quarters for female students of a school organized by Professor Joshua L. Tracy. A large two-story class room building adjoined this structure on the Northwest. The house now serves as the Park Superintendent's residence, but eventually will be restored to its original appearance.

THE JAIL

This small unique building is a one room stone jail, The Calaboose, built in 1871. Legend says that the jail has never been used. The only prisoner ever locked in it "hollered so loud and raised such a racket" that he was released.

DR. MATTHEW W. HALL HOUSE

This house was built in 1846, by Dr. Matthew W. Hall, a pioneer doctor. It was restored by the Missouri State Park Board in 1962-1964. It is lavishly furnished of the period of Dr. Hall's residence by the Missouri Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM HOUSE

George Caleb Bingham, one of the nation's foremost frontier artists, owned this house from 1837-1845. The Virginia born artist lived in the area around Arrow Rock after his family moved to Missouri when he was a boy of nine. He began his career as a professional artist in Columbia, Missouri, establishing a local reputation as a portrait artist. Eventually, he became a well known painter of the frontier scene, gaining an international reputation.

Among his more famous paintings are "Order Number Eleven", "Watching the Cargo", "Shooting for the Beef", "The Jolly Flatboatmen", "Raftmen Playing Cards", "The Verdict of the People", "County Election", "Stump Speaking", "Canvassing for a Vote", and many more.

In between his portraits and genre paintings, Bingham found time to serve as a representative from Saline County to the Missouri Legislature in 1848, National delegate to Whig National Convention in 1852 and to Democratic National Convention in 1872, Treasurer of the State of Missouri from 1862-1865, Democratic Elector for Missouri in 1868, President of the Board of Police Commissioners of Kansas City in 1874, Adjutant General for Missouri in 1875, and Professor of Art at the University of Missouri in 1877.

Bingham died in Kansas City in 1879.

The house was restored by the Missouri State Park Board in 1964-1966. It is furnished with early items from the period of 1830 to 1850.

MISSOURI
STATE PARKS

▲ PARKS
● HISTORIC SHRINES
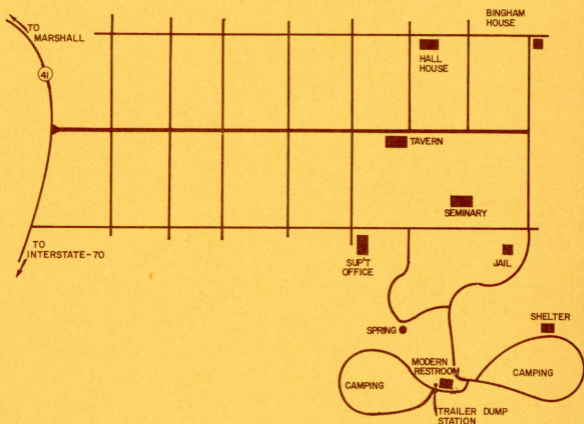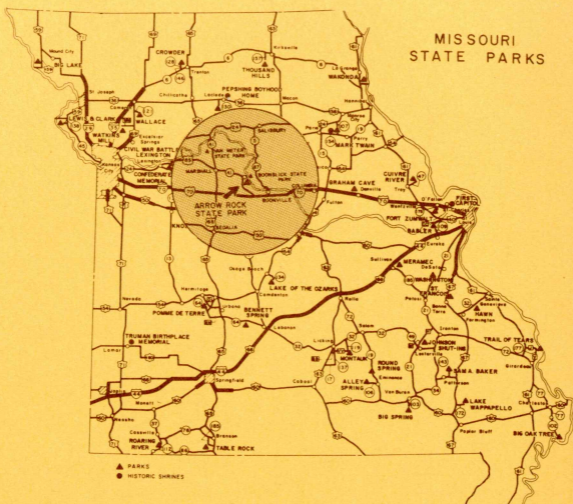
ARROW ROCK STATE PARK

Arrow Rock State Park is located immediately south of the town of Arrow Rock on State Highway 41, 13 miles North of Interstate 70. High on the limestone bluffs overlooking the Missouri River, this park offers picnicking, tent and trailer camping, modern restrooms, and a pleasant atmosphere.

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For information regarding other Historic Sites and State Parks,

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